

## Woodrising Computer Course Handout - Digital Pictures

This handout is about getting digital pictures into the computer, and how to file, view, retrieve and insert them into a document.

### **Q. What is a digital picture?**

A. It's a file, the same as files for documents, spreadsheets, software, programs etc. A file is nothing more than numbers that the computer uses to create those items.

### **Q. So how does a computer know that one file is a digital picture and another is a document etc?**

A. Its all in the filename. Whatever characters follow the **LAST full stop** in the filename tell the computer what type of file it is. Usually this is 3-4 characters. eg Fred.doc is a Microsoft Word document; Fred.mp3 is a music file; Fred.xls is a spreadsheet; Fred.jpg is a digital picture file

### **Q. But my computer has filenames without a full stop in them and they still open correctly. Why?**

A. The default setting in Microsoft Windows is to hide these last characters from you. This makes it much easier for new users so they don't stuff up the files and confuse Windows. Its easy to change this setting (Windows Explorer, Tools menu, Folder Options, View Tab, clear the tickbox for 'Hide extensions for known file types', Click OK.)

### **Q. So .jpg files are pictures files. Are there are other types of picture files?**

A. There sure are:- .png; .gif; .tiff; .bmp to name just a few. Before you ask, you can't change a picture to another type of picture file just by changing those last characters of the filename. You need to use a file format conversion program. There are plenty of free conversion programs. My favourite is IrfanView.

### **Q. So how do I connect my camera / card to my computer?**

A. There are many ways (surprise, surprise!)

Connect the camera to the computer, usually using a USB cord or docking station. It will take 15 seconds or so for Windows to discover the new drive. Then, as described below:

- Use the software that came with the camera.
- Or use a free photo program such as Picasa.
- Or simply use Windows Explorer and copy the files across.

Alternatively, if you computer has a slot for for your type of camera card (most modern notebooks do), or you have a 'card reader' plugged in then you can use that method instead of connecting the camera directly.

All you need appreciate is that the camera / camera card appears as a 'drive' to windows. The same as a USB memory stick or a portable hard drive or the hard drive inside the computer.

'Drives' are (usually) physical devices. Drives store folders and files.

**Q. Where should I store the pictures on the computer?**

A. Windows has a special folder called 'My Pictures' and I recommend you use it. You will usually find the 'My Pictures' folder inside the 'My Documents' or the 'Documents' or 'Pictures' folder. Its location and name will depend on the Operating System on your computer. (I wish Microsoft would stick to the one name and location)

**Q. Should I create sub folders inside the 'My Pictures' folder?**

A. YES, most definitely. This makes it much easier to find photos again, and **only you can decide on a suitable sub-folder naming system**. One suggestion is to name the sub-folders something like '110309 Aunty Mauds birthday' where 110309 is the date in the order of Year, Month Day, thus that date would be the 9th March 2011. If you stick to this YYMMDD naming convention then all your folders will nicely sort in date order. Try to keep folders names succinct.

**Q. After I've copied them to my computer should I delete them from the camera / card?**

A. That is entirely up to you. Personally I don't. I wait until such time as the card becomes near full and I am CERTAIN that all photos are on my computer AND backed up elsewhere before I completely delete the card. Camera cards are so cheap these days.

**Q. Are the pictures safe once they are in the computer? Some are very special to me.**

A. NO. Your computer hard drive can fail, or the computer can get stolen (it happened to my wife), or you or others may accidentally delete them, or a house fire or other catastrophe.

**Q. So how do I safeguard the photos (and other valuable files)?**

A. Back them up to a CD/DVD or portable hard drive. Suitable portable hard drives are under \$100. (We use a simple free system, Synchback, that automatically backs up our laptops every night to a common hard drive. I then back this up every few months to a portable hard drive.)

**Ideally** you should have three copies of the photos or files that are valuable to you. Plus one of those copies should be stored well away from the other two - eg at someone else's house. Another method for remote storage is to store them on the Internet - eg Picasa Web Albums, Flickr, PhotoBucket and Microsoft's Windows Live Photos to name a few provide free storage facilities that also let you share those photos with others. Just note that whilst storage is free, it will consume part of your monthly broadband allowance to 'upload' them. I use Picasa Web Albums to share any photos of interest ( <http://picasaweb.google.com/harvey45> ).

**Q. How do I use Picasa to import the picture files to my computer?**

1. Connect the camera or camera card as above.
2. Start Picasa
3. In Picasa, click the 'Import' button at the top left area of Picasa
4. Using the 'Import From' dropdown, select the 'Drive' (and possibly the required folder on that drive) to import the picture files from

5. Picasa will then start to read all the picture files on that drive or folder. This may take several minutes. If the picture files are already on your computer then they will have a red cross on them.
6. At the bottom of the screen you need to decide where to import the pictures to. By default it will select the 'My Pictures' area. In the 'Folder Title' box you can then select an existing folder, or type in a new folder name.
7. Finally click the 'Import All' button. Picasa will then import the pictures that do NOT have a red 'X' on them. This may take several minutes.
8. When the import has finished then click the Library tab and locate the folder that you imported to. You can then review and modify the pictures.

Note that the Picasa Import screen has several options that let you say Import only selected pictures, delete the pictures from the camera / card after importing, upload to the Internet etc. The above steps only describe the default settings.

**Q. How do I use the software that came with the camera to import the picture files?**

A. Read the instructions that came with it ;-).

**Q. How do I use Windows Explorer to import the picture files?**

A. Again, like everything in Windows there are several ways of doing this. This is one way.

1. Connect the camera or camera card as above.
2. Open Windows Explorer (called Explore in Windows 7). An easy way to do this is hold down the Windows key (it has a flag on it) and then **briefly tap** the 'E' key.
3. Locate the camera or card in the **left navigation panel** and click it (if there is no navigation panel then click the 'Folders' button on the toolbar). The **right side panel** will then show the contents of whatever is selected in the left side navigation panel.
4. Locate the picture files - you may need to open any folders and sub folders
5. Select the required picture files. To select a range of files single click the first file, scroll to the last file without clicking any file or folder, hold down the shift key and single click the last file. All files between the two clicks will be selected.
6. Copy the selected files - move your mouse over the selected files and click the **RIGHT** mouse button. Select Copy from the popup menu. (Or use Ctrl + C )
7. In the left pane, navigate to the My Pictures area. Select the required folder, or create a new folder.
8. **RIGHT** click on the folder and select Paste from the popup menu. (Or use Ctrl + V ) All the pictures will then start to be copied from the Camera card to the selected folder. This may take several minutes if a large number of pictures.

**Q. How can I view these pictures?**

A. Just double click on a picture file and it should open in a viewer program. Depending on the viewer program, you can navigate to the next picture in the folder, start a slide show of the pictures, rotate them and other effects.

**Q. The pictures have meaningless file names. Can I change them?**

A. Yes you can. Personally I don't as it's too tedious and upsets the order in which the photos were taken. I prefer to use Albums, Captions, Face Recognition and/or Tags in Picasa. To change a file name just **right click** on the file and select Rename. Alternatively do a s-l-o-w double click on the file name text. Again, keep any names as short as possible (ie succinct)

**Q. Can I crop and alter the photos in anyway?**

A. Yes. I use Picasa for this however the software that came with your camera probably does editing too. With some simple editing you can quite often make a so-so photo into something special.

**Q. Can I put any of the photos into a Word document?**

A. Yes. As usual there are several ways and this is one using Word 2007 or 2010:

1. Start Microsoft Word and open a new or existing document.
2. Click on the document where you want the picture to go.
3. Select the Insert Tab, then click 'Picture' in the Illustrations group
4. Browse for the picture you want to insert (If necessary use the View dropdown in the top right corner of the Insert Picture dialog window. Thumbnails is good.)
5. Select the picture(s) and then click Insert.

**Q. Can I alter the inserted pictures size?**

A. Yes. Single click the inserted picture so the small square sizing handles show. Then drag one of the corner handles.

**Q. Can I crop and/or rotate the picture?**

A. Yes. Right Click on the picture and select the crop tool or the rotate tool as required. When the crop tool is selected then the cursor will be a pointer with a small crop icon. Use it to drag the sizing handles and crop the picture. (The crop and rotate tools are also on the main toolbar, Format tab)

**Q. Can I make the text flow around the picture?**

A. Yes. Select the picture and then select from the 'Wrap Text' options in the Arrange section of the Format tab. The normal default for inserting a picture is for the picture to become part of the text. This results in big white spaces in the text. 'Square' will make text flow around the picture plus you will also be able to drag the picture around in the document.